

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 012544

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS LONDON
PHNOM PENH TEL AVIV TOKYO SAIGON FROM NEW DELHI JAN 14

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 0655

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSGC PFOR, IN, XF, VS

SUBJ: PLO RECOGNITION: PRG PROSPECTS FOR RECOGNITION

REF: STATE 006860

1. WE HAVE DELAYED REPLYING TO REFTEL UNTIL UW COULD SPEAK WITH GOI OFFICIALS CONCERNED. THE THEY ARE VAGUE ABOUT THE WHOLE PLO RECOGNITION ISSUE. (TEXT GOI STATEMENT ON OPENING OF PLO OFFICE SENT SEPTTEL). THE MEA JOINT SECRETARY (MIDDLE EAST), WHEN ASKED "WHY NOW?" SIMPLY SMILED AND REFERRED BACK TO UNGA RESOLUTION ON THE PLO, ARAFAT'S SPEECH IN NEW YORK, THE ARAB DECISION TO ACCEPT THE PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS, AND TO THE NON-ALIGNED POSITION ON THE PLO AND INDIAJS SUPPORT FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN 1974. HE CLAIMED THE GOI HAD NOT BEEN UNDER ANY PARTICULAR PRESSURE FROM THE ARABS ON THIS ISSUE IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, NOR WAS RECOGNITION IN ANY WAY A PRECONDITION FOR ARAB ASSISTANCE TO THE GOI ON PETROLEUM SUPPLIES AND CREDITS. THE ISSUE HAD BEEN CONSIDERED FOR A LONG TIME BY THE GOI AND
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IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO GO AHEAD NOW WITH ACCEPTANCE OF A

PLO OFFICE WHICH, IN FACT, WOULD HAVE QUASI-DIPLOMATIC BUT NOT FULL DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES IN NEW DELHI.

2. THE MEA DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL INFORMS US THAT WHILE THE PLO OFFICE WILL BE CARRIED IN THE DIPLOMATIC LIST, IT WILL BE IN THE BACK AMIDST THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPENDICES, THE MISSION WILL NOT USE DIPLOMATIC LICENSE PLATES, IT WILL HAVE PARTIAL BUT NOT FULL DIPLOMATIC FREE ENTRY PRIVILEGES AND WILL HAVE POUCH AND CODE PRIVILEGES. IT WILL BE HEAD-ED BY A "CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE", AS THE ARBA LEAGUE OFFICE IS, AND NOT BY AN AMBASSADOR.

3. ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN GOI AGREE-MENT TO A PLO OFFICE AND POSSIBLE AGREEMENT ON PGR OFFICE THE MEA DEPUTY SECRETARY (EAST ASIA) CAUTIONED US NOT TO DRAW PARALLELS BETWEEN THE GOI'S POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS. THE GOI HAS LONG VIEWED THE PLO AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINICANS BUT IS NOT UNDER ANY ILLUSION THAT THE PRG REPRESENTS ALL SOUTH VIETNAMESE. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY PROCEEDED TO RE-ITERATE HIS EARLIER STATEMENTS TO US THAT THE GOI AND PRG HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON A PRG OFFICE IN INDIA BUT NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED ON THE MODALITIES AND DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE PRG WILL NOT HAVE A DIPLOMATIC MISSION HERE, WILL THE CHIEF OF THE PRG OFFICE PRESNET LETTERS OF ACCREDITATION?

4. ON THE QUESTION OF THE TIMING OF AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE OPENING OF A PRG OFFICE HERE, WE REITERATED OUR PREVIOUS STRONG REPRESENTATIONS ON THE PRG QUESTION AND CALLED THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S ATTENTION TO AN INDIA PRESS REPORT THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS WOULD HAVE AN DELEGATION IN ATTENDANCE AT THE CPI CONGRESS AT THE END OF JANUARY. WE ASKED WHETHER THE DELEGATION WOULD BE RECEIVED IN DELHI AND WHETHER A PRG ANNOUNCEMENT MIGHT BE FORTH-COMING AT THAT TIME. THE MEA OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT HE "PERSONALLY VERY MUCH DOUBTED" ANY ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE SO SOON. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CAUTIONED, IN CONCLUSION, THE USG SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE WHEN A PRG ANNOUNCEMENT

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DOES FOLLOW IN TIME THE PLO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ANY GENERAL SHIFT HAS OCCURED IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

5. COMMENT: OUR GUESS, BASED ON THE LATTER CONVERSATION IS THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A GOI-PRG AGREEMENT FOR A PRG OFFICE IN DELHI IS STILL NOT IMMINENT AND THAT THE STATUS OF A PRG OFFICE WILL BE ANALGOUS TO THAT OF THE PLO. THE MEA'S VERSION OF THE FACTORS LEADING UP TO INDIAN

ACCEPTANCE OF A PLO OFFICE IS PROBABLY GENERALLY ACCURATE.
WE ASSUME THE SPECIFIC TIMING MAY HAVE RELATED TO WHEN
MRS. GANDHI GOT AROUND TO CONSIDERING THE ISSUE, AND THIS
WAS PROBABLY IN TURN RELATED TO THE SPATE OF ARAB VISITORS
TO NEW DELHI IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS (UAE, BAHRAIN, LIBYA)
AND MRS. GANDHI'S FORTHCOMING TRIP TO IRAQ JANUARY 18.
THERE WERE A NUMBER OF ELEMENTS FAVORING INDIAN AGREEMENT
(INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THE PLO WAS ALREADY REPRESENTED
IN NEW DELHI THROUGH THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES MISSION)
AND LITTLE FOREIGN (AND NO DOMESTIC) PRESSURE AGAINST ITS
DOING SO. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE HAS RECEIVED
MODEST EDITORIAL COMMENDATION, NO CRITICISM, BUT HAS REALLY
AROUSED LITTLE INTEREST IN THE PRESS OR -- SO FAR AS
WE CAN TELL FROM A BRIEF SAMPLE -- ELSEWHERE.
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